(ii) Dy. Director General (Programmes), ICCR toured abroad on one occasion and visited Egypt.

(iii) Assistant Private Secretary to President, ICCR toured abroad on one occasion and visited United Kingdom and France.

The purpose of their visits and the expenditure incurred on these visits is as per Annexure. (*See* Appendix 171, Annexure No. 24]

(c) The achievements of these foreign tours are as under:

The tours abroad have facilitated establishment of new cultural links, revived and strengthened the existing cultural relations and enhanced mutual understanding of India and other countries and institutions abroad. The visits have enhanced cultural exchanges at the institutional level and at the bilateral level facilitating people to people contact.

The tours abroad by President, ICCR and the officials of the ICCR have unilateraly given opportunities to negotiate steps and measures to further the objectives of ICCR as defined in the Memorandum of Association when the ICCR was established in 1950.

The visits abroad have facilitated a better understanding and appreciation abroad of Indian art and culture and put forth an image of India in the international community fulfilling its endeavour to continuously enhance people to people contact with an open attitude while being receptive to the cultures of other countries.

The visits abroad have provided a supporting role for exchange programmes with all friendly countries. The periodic visits and meetings with heads of cultural departments, organisations, institutions, scholars, intellectuals and policy makers are necessary in view of the emphasis on implementation of formal reciprocal arrangements for cultural exchanges contained in the Cultural Exchange Protocols.

Protection of Hindu temples in Vietnam

1127. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the jewels and properties of Hindu temples in Vietnam are in the custody of the National Bank of Vietnam; and

(b) if so, what steps are taken by our embassy to help the management of Hindu temples to recover those properties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) The jewels and some other items of Saigon Thendayudhapani Temple belonging to the Chettiar Community who left Saigon in the wake of the fall of Saigon in 1975, has been lying in the custody of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of HO Chi Minh City.

(b) The properties have been retained in the custody of the Industrial and Commercial Bank and not handed over to the temple management committee, as per the wishes of the Chettiar Community.

US Counsul-General's comment on Economic policies of West Bengal

1128. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the comments recently made by the Consul-General of the United States of America at Calcutta openly criticising the economic and industrial policies of the Government of West Bengal;

(b) whether it is within the preview of a foreign diplomat to offer such public comments on our internal affairs; and

(c) whether Government will ask the US administration to make proper amends for this breach of etiquette on the part of its representative?